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C H A R G E
A N D
S E R M O N,
DELIVERED AT THE
O R D I N A T I O N
O F T H E

Rev. Mr. J O B D A V I D,

OCTOBER 7, 1773, at F R O M E, *Somersetshire.*

The C H A R G E
By D A N I E L T U R N E R, M. A.

The S E R M O N
By C A L E B E V A N S, M. A.

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A

C H A R G E, &c.

AS the part assigned to me in the solemn service of this day, is to give a word of exhortation to you, my worthy brother, who have now been publicly set a part to the pastoral office, I would, with all due respect, offer to your serious and candid attention, a few thoughts from that portion of the divine word which you may find,

II Epist. *Tim.* iv. ch. 5. v. MAKE FULL PROOF
OF THY MINISTRY.

The whole verse reads thus, *But watch thou in all things; endure affliction; do the work of an evangelist—make full proof of thy ministry.* And here many useful particulars are suggested, but my time will not permit me to enlarge upon them; I shall confine myself, therefore, to the last clause—*Make full proof of thy ministry.*

The apostle introduces this part of his epistle to Timothy with great solemnity of expression, which you may consider, my brother, as addressed to you, ver. 1. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom.*—He then goes on to enumerate several particulars of his duty, intermixing proper reasons and motives as he goes along.—In the clause I have particu-

larized he fums up the whole—*Make full proof of thy ministry.*

Let us consider here,

I. What is implied in this expreffion, both as to the *matter* and *manner* of the duty ;

II. Some of the many motives you have to engage your attention to it.

I. Let us consider briefly what is implied in this expreffion—*Make full proof of thy ministry*—both as to the *matter* and *manner* of the duty.

The word ($\pi\lambda\eta\rho\phi\omicron\rho\epsilon\omega$) here used, you know, properly fignifies to complete, confirm, eftablifh, or literally, *to bring any matter to its fullnefs*. It is, therefore, as much as if the apoftle had faid, *fully accomplifh thy ministry*. And though this is applied to *Timothy* as an *evangelift*, which was an extraordinary office, next to that of the apoftlefhhip, yet it is applicable to the ordinary minifters of the word, as included in the other, and, therefore, applicable to you, my good brother, whom, for that reason, I may very properly exhort and intreat to *make full proof of that ministry*, which you have now fo fo-lemnly taken upon you.—Which muft imply,

1ft. *That you diligently attend to, and execute every part of the minifterial duty ; and that fo as may be moft likely to anfwer the end of its institution.*

(1.) It is a part of your minifterial duty *to lead the public worfhip of God, in prayer and praife*; or offer up to God, in the name and behalf of the people, their fupplications, confeffions, thankfgivings. And here, if you would make full proof of your miniftry, you will be concerned to do this with all poffible ferioufnefs, and
reverence

reverence of the Divine Majesty; the deepest humility before him; and earnest solicitude for his gracious acceptance; and, therefore, with such sentiments, in such language, and manner of address, as may most effectually engage the attention of your fellow-worshippers, and draw out their devotest affections, their desire and hope, their faith and love towards God, to lively exercise; that they, with you, may *worship God in spirit and in truth*; and not as too many do, make these serious and important duties a matter of mere amusement.

(2.) You are to *preach the word, and be instant in season and out of season*, (ver. 2.) That is, be ready to embrace every proper opportunity, and be constant and unwearied in it. But remember, Sir, it is of the utmost consequence, that it be THE WORD which you preach, the pure unadulterated gospel of Christ, as you find it in your bible, and not the inventions of men, and the mere nostrums of a party.

The apostle says much on this head in this epistle, and elsewhere. For even then there were some who could *not endure sound doctrine*, i. e. such experimental, practical truths as tended to promote the health of the soul, and nourish it up in the fear and love of God, and the genuine principles of true evangelical piety and virtue. For this is what the apostle means by *sound doctrine*, as appears from the context, and not those refined speculations, and specious perversions of the simplicity of the gospel, which they, who affected to be wise above what is written, had introduced into their preachments, and which their hearers were so fond of, that they endeavoured to *heap up to themselves teachers*, so well adapted to gratify their *itching ears*, their eager desire after these soul deluding novelties.

(3.) I

(3.) I would not wish you to bring controversy into the pulpit any farther than what is *absolutely necessary*; yet it is *a part of your duty to contend earnestly for the faith*; not by using any external violence, or calling in the aid of the civil magistrate, *but by holding fast the faithful word, and by sound doctrine, in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves*; that you may have a witness in their consciences of the *power of the truth*. Be as clear and scriptural as possible in the stating your own notions; as calm and candid in defending them, making the most charitable allowances in favour of those who differ from you. You have a right to *reason*, but none to *revile*—may *abound in arguments*, but should be *sparing* in your *censures*.—Furious and uncharitable contentions, and the rage of ignorant bigotry, are intirely inconsistent with the genuine spirit of the gospel, and can never really serve the interest of truth. I wish you, my dear brother, to be ever a stranger to this spirit, and that you may be solicitous to *know nothing, comparatively, save Jesus Christ and him crucified, preaching repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, charging them that believe to maintain good works*; keeping as closely as possible to the apostolic models in all your public discourses. To this end it will be necessary to *give yourself to the reading and study of the sacred books*, with a serious endeavour to know their true meaning. And to this purpose it will be necessary to divest yourself, as much as possible, of all preconceived opinions; and not to depend too implicitly on commentators; but to see and judge for yourself, diligently comparing scripture with scripture, attending to the drift of the argument, as it appears in the context, humbly and earnestly imploring the guidance of that gracious spirit whose dictates they are.

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And take heed of satisfying yourself with first appearances, and superficial enquiries after truth.—The well is deep, and there is no getting at her living waters, without great pains and labour.—We must *search for her as for hidden treasure*. And here one general hint which I would give you may be of some use in assisting you to judge of the *soundness* of any doctrine, that may come into consideration at any time. It is this—Such doctrines, on the one hand, as tend to lead men to make light of Christ, and his glorious mediation, sacrifice, and righteousness, or of the necessity of the influences of his gracious spirit, and to flatter them in high conceits of their own wisdom, power, and goodness, such doctrines can never be the *sound doctrines* of the gospel, because nothing is more evident, than that it is the main design of the gospel, to point out the Lord Jesus Christ, as *made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; redeeming us to God by his blood; and HIS vital spirit as freeing us from the law of sin and death*, and restoring us to his likeness. On the other hand, such doctrines as teach men to make light of sin, of repentance and holiness—that exalt privileges in opposition to duties; set the law and the gospel at variance, and that tend to feed and gratify a sour, malevolent, bigotted, uncharitable spirit, and create unbrotherly dissensions amongst serious Christians.—Such doctrines can never be from the God of holiness, peace and love, nor tend in the least to nourish the soul in the *real* power and comfort of the divine life. If you would *feed the flock of Christ* it must be with the wholesome pasturage of his own pure gospel. Remember, my brother, Jesus is the life and soul of all true religion and righteousness, it is your business as HIS minister, to hold him up to the
view

view of your hearers as such, and to display his divine excellencies and the *unsearchable riches of his grace*;—To endeavour to convince sinful men of their need of him as a Saviour, and to persuade them to commit the keeping of their souls to him, expecting the favour of God, justification, and eternal life through him; at the same time reminding them, that however confident their trust may be in Christ; yet if they *live after the flesh they shall die*. Preach, therefore, the *law* as well as the *gospel*.—The *law* as the means of convincing men of sin, and of their want of such a Saviour as Christ is; and as a rule of life to the believer, not on any account to be dispensed with.—Preach the absolute necessity of that great spiritual and moral change which our Lord calls being *born again*, and the necessity of the gracious power of the divine spirit to effect it. Preach the great and precious promises of the bible, and open their sacred contents for the comfort of the afflicted soul, and as the means of animating all to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*, and live more and more obedient to his will in the comfortable and *patient*, yet *earnest* longing after the full enjoyment of eternal life and glory.

And while you thus endeavour to preach Christ, and him crucified, do it with all possible seriousness, life, and power. Let your hearers see that you are in earnest, and that you do, indeed, believe the infinite importance of the truths you declare to them, and have really felt their power.

Let your discourses be studied; but affect not by any means to appear learned, or floridly eloquent, to gratify a false and trifling taste. But while your matter is purely evangelical, let your style and language be clear, lively, expressive—adapted to inform the judgment; pierce

pierce and alarm the conscience; warm and amend the heart. In a word, endeavour, by those awful and delightful views of things which the gospel of Christ affords, to *persuade men*, to forsake their evil ways and turn unto the Lord, seeking for honour and glory, and eternal life, through faith in Christ, and obedience to his gospel; giving to saints and sinners, the strong and the weak, their proper portions, *rightly dividing the word of truth*—Thus you will shew yourself a workman that needs not to be ashamed, and indeed make full proof of your ministry.

(3.) Another part of your work is to *administer the ordinances of Christ, baptism and the supper of communion*. The one denoting our *dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness*; the other our vital union with Christ, and constant dependance upon him, and the virtue of his death. Let the nature and design of these institutions be frequently explained to all, and particularly to those who make use of them, that they may know what they do, and make a rational and pious use of them. And let your administrations here be accompanied with a truly devout disposition of mind in yourself, and with a solemnity of manner becoming the majesty of our holy religion; and all according to the directions Christ and his apostles have given us, and yet endeavouring to lead the minds of the people beyond the ordinances themselves, to the moral and spiritual ends of their institution.

(4.) It pertains also to your office, my dear Sir, to *watch for souls* as the apostle expresseth it: that is to watch over the spiritual and eternal interests of mankind in general, as far as your influence extends; but especially and particularly over theirs, who are more immediately committed to your charge.

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This is no small part of your work nor the least difficult. And here *to make full proof of your ministry*, it will be necessary for you to observe what effect your public ministry has upon those who attend it—Watching narrowly to see if there be any, either awakened or stumbled, comforted or discouraged by it, that you may, by private conversation, assist their enquiries, remove their difficulties, and encourage them in the ways of God and their salvation. It will be necessary also that you should, as opportunity serves, and the case requires, visit your flock in order to observe the state of their spiritual interests, and how they stand affected towards their Redeemer, whether improving or declining in the spiritual life; and giving them such instructions and admonitions as the case requires. The sick and afflicted will require your very particular and compassionate regards, praying with them as well as for them, at least when desired; opening to them the gracious promises and instructions of the divine word. At such times the mind is usually more convinced of the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, the need of divine grace, and the infinitely superior worth of its consolations, and therefore, much good, through the divine blessing, may be done to their best interests.

Under this head of *watching over the flock of Christ*, will come the administration of church discipline; or putting in execution the laws of Christ for its more perfect purity and edification, which implies your being well acquainted with the conduct and behaviour of its several members, both in the church, and in the world, that they may be exhorted, reprov'd, warn'd, encouraged, or censured and separated from the church, as the case requires. And here a great deal of care and caution, and the utmost impartiality, resolution, and tenderness

tendernefs are neceffary—But here I need not enlarge, as you will have the wifdom and experience of your worthy and venerable colleague to affift you, and manage with you, and for you.

2. *To make full proof of your miniftry, is to make the purity and spirituality of your character fully appear to all.* Or, as the apoftle expreffeth it, *to be an enfample to the flock, and have a good report of thofe who are without.* Endeavour, my brother, to live what you preach, and be a truly burning and fhining light in the world. Much depends on this, both as to the credit of religion, and the fuccefs of your miniftry. An immoral, or grofsly imprudent minifter, is a fcandal to the Chriftian name; does infinite prejudice to the caufe he pretends to plead, grieves the truly pious, flumbles the weak, and hardens the wicked: fo that while he profefles himfelf the fervant of Chrift, he is in reality the flave of Satan, and a promoter of his infernal defigns againft the happinefs of mankind, and the glory of God. I am, indeed, fully perfwaded we may expect better things of you, my good brother; but it may be of fervice for the beft of minifters often to reflect upon the fpiritual and holy nature of their character and office, and how much depends upon the propriety of their behaviour. Watch therefore narrowly over your own heart, and all its propenfities; and againft every temptation to an inconfiftent conduct, for you are not only, not out of the reach of temptation, but in fome refpects are more abundantly expofed to it; watch therefore, with all diligence, left you fall by it into fin. Remember you have affumed a character that implies peculiar nearnefs to God, and feparation from the world—You are a fpiritual man, devoted to the fervice of the great Redeemer, and the promotion of his fpiritual kingdom of grace and holinefs, and to

spread the favour of his name, not only by your doctrine but your example; so that you may be able to refer all about you to your own conduct, and with the apostle say—*Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ*. Endeavour, therefore, my brother, to keep these things always in mind, that you may appear every where in character, and be, what you have this day so solemnly professed to be, not by any of those affected singularities, that superstitious preciseness, or those specious airs of sanctity which so often distinguish the mere pretenders to religion; but by that purity and uprightness, humility, and universal benevolence, that fear of God, love to Christ, and universal regard to the duties of piety and righteousness which the gospel teaches; and which when it appears to flow from an heart really touched with its grace, seldom fails of inspiring even the profane and vicious with respect and veneration. But,

3. In order to your making full proof of your ministry, it will be necessary *also, that you should do all from the heart, voluntarily, and of good-will*. So the apostle, when speaking of the pastoral office—*Taking*, says he, *the oversight thereof WILLINGLY; not for filthy lucre's-sake, but of a READY MIND*.

They who engage in the ministry of the gospel constrained by worldly and sinister motives, will have nothing else in view in the prosecution of it, but the gratification of their ruling passion, and consequently will perform the work of the Lord negligently, and as a mere task, in which the heart has no share. But I trust that you my friend, have been moved to this great business from nobler principles, and that it is the real choice of your whole heart, out of love to Christ, and the everlasting welfare of immortal souls; and that you will carry your heart into every part of your duty,
and

and *do what you do heartily as unto the Lord*; with a real and ardent desire of promoting the interest of pure and evangelical religion and virtue; and really make the ministry your main and principal study; your *business*, and not your mere *amusement*. Other studies *may*, and in their place *should* be attended to, but they should be such as have a real connexion with, and may assist you in the better performance of your ministerial work, and subserve its design. And all this with unwearied constancy and perseverance, in the face of all discouragements. The ministerial character is too sacred to be taken up and laid down at pleasure, just as it may, or may not, serve any bye or carnal ends. Be patient, therefore, my brother, under the temptations and difficulties you may meet with in your work—remember the charge is—*Be thou faithful unto death*. Often look back upon the solemnities of this day, the sacred nature of the obligations you are under, and the vows you have implicitly made, of devotion to the will and service of God, as a means of enforcing your regard to that charge; that you may hold on unto the end of your course of duty, and *make indeed full proof of your ministry*. But,

4. In order to answer to the apostle's exhortation in our text, you will, Sir, give me leave to observe, *that all should be done with the most humble and entire dependence on the divine grace*. *Without me*, says Christ, *ye can do nothing*. We are none of us sufficient of ourselves for the great duties and trials of the ministerial office. Our trust, therefore, must be in the *Lord* our God, and the gracious supplies of his Spirit. The greatest natural powers of genius, the greatest literary accomplishments, yea, even the greatest measure of spiritual gifts and graces are nothing in themselves, though exerted to the utmost, without the power and blessing

bleſſing of God accompanying them. We want direction in the choice of proper ſubjects, aſſiſtance in the ſtudy of them, that we may chooſe and think to the purpoſe ; and when we come to deliver our thoughts, though clothed in the moſt acceptable words, and uttered in the moſt lively and powerful manner, unleſs they are accompanied with a divine energy, and carried to the heart with the demonſtration of the vital Spirit of Chriſt, all will be as ineffectual as a tale that is told to the moſt careleſs hearer.—A *Paul* may plant, an *Apollos* water, *but God giveth the increaſe.*

Undertake then, my good brother, every part of your work with the deepeſt ſenſe of your own inſufficiency, and with a conſtant eye to that gracious aſſiſtance, which is promiſed to ſuch as ſeek it. Be, therefore, conſtant and fervent in prayer, and the private exerciſes of evangelical devotion, as well as public.—Study the ſcriptures, not merely as the ſubject of your public diſcourſes, but as divine food for your own ſoul, and the ſupport of your ſpiritual life. In a word, let communion with God be your daily entertainment, and faith in his promiſes your daily exerciſe; this is the way to make that proof of your miniſtry, which will be moſt comfortable to yourſelf, and uſeful to others.

5. To this end too it will be neceſſary, that *you conſtantly endeavour to do all with a ſingle eye to the glory of God, and to keep ſelf intirely out of ſight.*

Self-love is, indeed, a natural principle, and ought to have its due ſhare of influence. But it is like all our other natural principles, ſadly corrupted by ſin that dwells in us, and, if ſuffered, would lead us to ſeek our *own* honor and gratification in the *fiſt* place. The firſt leſſon, therefore, which, as Chriſtians, we are taught is—*deny thyſelf*—Endeavour then by all means,
my

my worthy friend, to keep down this vitiated inordinate self-love, and check its first appearances in every form—seek not *your own things*; but *the things of Christ, and his kingdom and glory*. To take upon us and prosecute the work of the christian ministry for selfish ends—The gratification of our vanity, and love of applause, or a thirst for dominion, or the possessions of filthy lucre, is no better than an infernal prostitution of the sacred character. I cannot so much as suspect the possibility of any thing like this in your case, my worthy brother. But, in some shape or other, this *idol, self-love*, is ready to impose upon the best hearts, without the greatest care and watchfulness. Be, therefore, my friend, much upon your guard here; look narrowly into the springs and first movements of your heart; keep the glory of God, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of mankind constantly in view, and direct the whole and every part of your ministry to this end, and leave it to a wise and gracious providence to secure your happiness, and it shall be secure. And thus you will *make full proof of your ministry* indeed. But here,

II. Let me, as I proposed, suggest a few things by way of motive to this full and complete regard to your duty.

1st. You may consider, for your comfort, that *your office is one of the most honourable and important that men can be called to, in this world*. He that desireth the office of a bishop, says the apostle, *desireth A GOOD WORK*. Such an office, in the apostolic idea of it, you have now taken upon you.—You are, though in a lower sense than the apostles were, an *ambassador for Christ*—an *angel*, or special messenger to his church. Entrusted with an high and most important commission from him.—To be employed in any service under the commission
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and authority of a temporal prince, is esteemed honourable amongst men; especially if it be the great business of the state, or to treat with other ruling powers, about the peace and welfare of kingdoms: but you are employed, by commission from the KING OF KINGS, in the infinitely more important business of reconciling rebellious creatures to himself; and treating with them about points of the highest concernment to *his* honor and *their* eternal life and salvation.—You are entrusted with the *preaching of the everlasting gospel*, and those great truths that lie at the foundation of that kingdom of grace and glory, which Jesus came into *our* world, and died upon a cross to establish. You are called to take the charge of a part of that *church which he hath purchased with his blood*, and (if faithful) are held as a star in the right hand of God, to diffuse the light of the Sun of Righteousness through a dark and benighted world, and lead men from the dangers of everlasting perdition to the world of everlasting bliss and glory. And surely this, this must be the greatest dignity, the highest honour that can be put on mortal man. And a serious view of it may tend to awaken in your breast the most pleasing sensations, and fire it with the most zealous concern *to make full proof of such a ministry*.

But let it be ever remembered, my brother, this honour, cannot be *really* enjoyed, or felt as a *motive* in this case but by an HUMBLE MIND—a mind deeply affected with its own unworthiness, and absolute dependance on the good pleasure of God, and its obligations to his grace. That false pride which is the offspring of vicious self-love, robs us of the very power of enjoyment of this spiritual honor, and consequently of the power of feeling it as a motive to our diligence.—Let us remember then, that as we receive this honor, not of desert

fert in us, but of the mere grace of God, so it is bestowed upon us for the purposes of *his* glory not *our* own, but as *ours* results from the advancement of *his*—We are but instruments in his hand ; it is an honour, indeed, to be so, but an honour we must not be *proud* of, though we may *rejoice* in it.

2. Remember for your farther encouragement, *that Christ has promised his gracious presence and assistance in your work.*

The work you have undertaken is confessedly exceeding great, and at best, attended with many difficulties and discouragements, and exercises of patience—I will not cast a damp on the pleasures of this day by an enumeration of them here.—The greatest and best of men may well say, *Who is sufficient for these things :* but we may all say, *Our sufficiency is of God, and that we can do all things through Christ strengthening us.* He never calls his servants to any work, but he in some good degree fits them for it, and affords them grace to enable them to go through it, and bear them up under all the afflictions that attend it. *Lo !* Says he, *I am with you always—I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.—Fear not I will keep thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* Whatever your temptations, discouragements, and afflictions, may be ; however heavy and lasting, your God sees and compassionates your case, and though he may see fit to continue the distress—you will find that *his grace is sufficient for you*, if you do indeed, humbly and dutifully trust it. He is most assuredly *a present help in every time of need.* What glorious motives are these to diligence and patience in *HIS* work ! How animating is it to think, that we are not only engaged in the best and noblest service, but that we serve the best of masters, who kindly notices

our labours of love, with a view to assist us in them! To think that we have our gracious and Almighty God and Redeemer with us to help us in every difficulty, and support and comfort us under every afflicting discouragement!

When, therefore, my brother, you find your discouragements increase, your endeavours grow languid, and you are ready to faint in your mind—Look to Jesus—call to mind the many gracious assurances he has given you of his care over you, and readiness to assist you, and carry you through them all, however afflictive and alarming, and there rest your soul: he is faithful and cannot possibly disappoint the hope that is dutifully exercised on his promises. And when, as I doubt not you often will, you actually experience and enjoy this gracious presence and help of God, how delightful will your work be! When he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, enlightens, cheers and enlarges your heart, warms your devout affections, leads you to the wells of salvation, and enables you to drink deep into their living waters, with what pleasure will you go on in your work! How will you even triumph over all the discouragements you meet with in it, and thus make still *fuller proof of your ministry!*

3. *The consciousness of the being enabled by the grace of God, to make FULL proof of your ministry, will be a source of continual pleasure to you.* A good conscience is our best friend, next to our God. Especially under discouragements and afflictions arising from the unjust censures of men. So *Job* found it under his complicated trials. And the apostle mentions it in the same view, where he says—*For our rejoicing is this, The testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had*
our

our conversation in the world. And with what consolation and delight does the psalmist mention this circumstance — *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness from the great congregation.*—And thus emboldened he pleads, *withhold not thy tender mercies from me, O Lord, let thy loving-kindness and thy truth preserve me.*

And with the like pleasure and humble triumph in the grace of God, the apostle addresses the Elders of the church at Ephesus—*Ye know, says he, After what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many fears and temptations; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you; testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and have not counted my life dear to me that I might finish my course with joy.* Consider these things, and you will find there is no small consolation in the real possession of such a temper, and the inward witness of such a conduct, and consequently no small motive to your thus *making full proof of your ministry*, according to these patterns.

4. As another motive, *think, my brother, often think, on the certainty and solemnity of that account which you must give unto God at last.* He that has called you to be a *steward of his mysteries*, will call you to give an *account of your stewardship* e'er long. And the more talents he has committed to your care and improvement, the larger will that account be. Your trust is great and important; much of the glory of God, the immortal interests of mankind, and the travail of the Redeemer's soul is concerned in it. If any one soul should perish everlastingly through the means of your *wilful neglect and*

carelessness, you must answer for it at the tribunal of the Judge of the quick and the dead. It is a most awful and affecting charge which is given to the prophet *Ezekiel*; and which is, in the main, applicable to every minister of the gospel, that has the care of souls especially—*Thou, O son of man, have I set a watchman to the house of Israel: therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.—When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die: if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand!*—Tremendous charge! There is no trifling here without great guilt and great danger. And from a serious attention to this, my dear brother, I am persuaded your heart must feel, a very powerful and serious motive to engage you to *make as full proof of your ministry* as possible. And may we all feel it who have taken upon us this great work of watching over the eternal interests of mankind. It will be dreadful to preach the *grace* of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in *this* world, and perish by his *wrath* in the *next*—To publish the glad tidings of *salvation* to *others*, and suffer the pains of eternal *damnation* *ourselves*! The very mention of it is enough to make us tremble—The Lord of his infinite mercy grant we may none of us be numbered with such transgressors!

But let us turn our eyes to the more comfortable side of the prospect before us, and observe, my brother,

5. And lastly, That if, by the grace of God, ever ready to help us, you *DO make full proof of your ministry*, your *imperfections* will be *graciously forgiven*, and your *reward* *infinitely great and glorious*. Your *imperfections* will be *graciously forgiven*—You must be sensible you will, after all your best endeavours, fall short of perfection; and

and that many sins will attend your holiest services, by one means or another,—a very affecting and discouraging thought in itself. But the Master we serve knows our frame, and the weakness that attends us, and is full of compassion, and ready to forgive; not strict to mark iniquity, but plenteous in mercy, and delights in the exercise of it, in favour of all who sincerely mean to know and do his will, repent of their sins, and trust in him.—You may, therefore, depend on his gracious goodness, to pardon all sinful imperfections involuntarily committed, or truly repented of. This is a consideration extremely encouraging to be diligent, faithful, and unwearied in our work. And what is ~~still~~ more so, *great will be your reward at last*; though not of *debt* but of *grace*; and great in proportion to your diligence and patience—For if he that gives a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, as such, shall not go without a suitable recompense; great must be theirs who take serious pains to supply thirsty souls with the waters of eternal life and salvation.

The very consciousness of being an instrument in the hand of God, of turning sinners from darkness to light, from the powers of *Satan* to *CHRIST*, saving them from everlasting perdition, and leading them to everlasting blessedness, may afford unutterable delight to a truly good mind, even in this world, under all the disadvantages that attend us; but infinitely more in the next. Accordingly we are told, that they who turn *many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*.—What divine and heart-rejoicing pleasure will it be to you, my brother, to find this the case with you? What pleasing emotions will it excite in your breast at the last day, to see a number of immortal creatures, for whom you did, as it were, *travail in birth till Christ was formed*

in them, rejoicing at his right hand, and owning you as the happy instrument of their salvation ! And with what rapturous delight, in that case, will your looks of gratitude be directed to HIM, who graciously put this honour upon you, and how will that delight be heightened when you hear him say—Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast made full proof of thy ministry, enter thou into the fulness of the joy of thy Lord !

With such animating prospects as these before you, leave it to them who know no better, and have no higher taste of pleasure, to seek the applauses of men, and delight themselves with the wondering stare of ignorance, and the empty breath of senseless praise, from their deluded followers ; be it your concern, my worthy friend, to cherish more exalted sentiments, more divine and spiritual feelings, and set in the highest estimation the approbation of your conscience and the plaudit of your God.

But, should it be that your labours are not attended with all the success you desire, be not discouraged, your *labour cannot be in vain while it is in the Lord*. The want of success is a sore affliction to all faithful ministers—But, remember, it is an affliction the best and greatest of them have felt. *Who hath believed our report*, cries the great *Isaiah* ; and the still greater JESUS, though *he spake as never man spake*, adopts the same language for the same reason. But it is an affliction that, with others, will work for you *an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory* ; and you will find that they *who sow the divine seed with tears*, at last *shall reap with joy*. Christ is able to open to you new and unexpected scenes of delight, even out of this painful circumstance, so that what you want in the pleasures of a more successful ministry, you will find made up to you in the gracious rewards of that
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faith and patience which you was enabled to exercise under the want of success. For to all successful or unsuccessful ministers, *if faithful unto death*, he has (as to all his servants) promised *a crown of life*, and will most certainly make good his word. This glorious object he holds out to the view of all his discouraged and afflicted people in general, and his ministers in particular, to animate them in their duty.—And, remember, it is a crown which he has purchased our title to with his most precious blood, in which his redeeming love shines forth as one of its brightest jewels, and the glories of which shall never fade away!

May you, my dear brother, and may we all, and particularly such of us as are fellow-labourers with you in the word and doctrine, feel the power of these motives, and thus *making full proof of our ministry, finish our course with joy!*

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S E R M O N, &c.

I Congratulate you, my honored friends, the members of this religious community, upon the peaceful, unanimous, happy settlement of this day! May the great Lord and Head of the church, abundantly bless you, and each of your ministers who are over you in the Lord, and render you mutual blessings to one another!—To contribute my part towards the perpetuity and increase of your felicity, as you have done me the honor of desiring that I would address you upon this solemn occasion, permit me to recommend to your serious attention and regard, the exhortation of the venerable apostle *John* to his well-beloved *Gaius*. See his

3 EPIS. VERSE 11.

BELOVED, FOLLOW NOT THAT WHICH IS EVIL;
BUT THAT WHICH IS GOOD. HE THAT DOETH
GOOD IS OF GOD: BUT HE THAT DOETH
EVIL, HATH NOT SEEN GOD.

This short, but sweet and affectionate epistle, is addressed, as I have already intimated, by the venerable, amiable apostle *John*, to his well-beloved *Gaius*.—It begins with the most affectionate good wishes of health

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and all kind of prosperity. The apostle then expresses his joy at the account he had received from the brethren of the pious and kind disposition of his friend *Gaius* towards them, and exhorts him to cherish such benevolent affections, and to continue to exercise them upon every proper occasion. *Beloved*, says the apostle, *thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom, if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well. Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.* The apostle then speaks with a considerable degree of resentment and displeasure, of the very different character and conduct of one *Diotrephes*. *I wrote*, says the apostle, *unto the church; but DIOTREPHEs, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words, and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.* Then come in the words first read. *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*

In these words, we have

- I. A very extensive, weighty exhortation. *Follow, not that which is evil, but that which is good.*
- II. An awakening, important consideration, to enforce a due attention to it. *He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*—

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I propose to attend to each of these branches of the subject in order, and then to close with some general improvement.

I. Let us consider the exhortation before us.—It naturally divides itself into two parts, the *negative*, and the *positive*.

1. The negative; *follow not that which is evil*.

There is nothing which men are more apt to follow, than that which is evil. It has been so from the beginning, and it continues so still. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. Let almost any man set but an example of that which is evil, and he will soon have a multitude of followers. No doubt, there were many in the church to which *Diotrephes* belonged, ready to imitate his haughty, self-sufficient, overbearing, uncharitable spirit. There cannot, therefore, be a more necessary or suitable exhortation, than *not* to follow that which is evil. We are all in danger of following that which is evil, and all need to be cautioned against it.—What we are cautioned against is, *that which is evil*. Not only that particular species of evil which *Diotrephes* was chargeable with, to which the apostle might *more immediately* refer; but *all evil* in general, every kind of evil and every instance of evil.—The great standard of moral good and evil is the *will of God*, made known to us in his word, and more especially in what we style his *law*. Whatever is contradictory or repugnant to the revealed will of God is *evil*, whether it respects our *thoughts*, our *words*, or our *actions*. And this is what we are here exhorted not to follow or *imitate*.† That is, however such a man as *Diotrephes* may behave himself, and whatever temper *he* may discover, yet if it be

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† The original word is *μιμωδ*.

evil, do not you *imitate* him under any pretence whatever. Though you may think him a very *extraordinary* man, that he has *more knowledge* than any of his brethren, and is a man of *great religion*; yet if his *temper*, if his *conduct* be evil, be contrary to the will and word of God, see that you do not indulge the like. Beloved, *follow not that which is evil*. Whoever does that which is evil, and how many soever may be your temptations to it, see that you do it not.—Follow not that which is evil, with respect to your *thoughts*. Do not indulge and cherish evil thoughts, evil desires and affections.—Follow not that which is evil with respect to your *words*. Take care that you do not *speak* unadvisedly with your lips, or utter foolish things. There are *proud* words, *bitter* words, *perverse* words, *rash*, *ensorious*, *malevolent*, *ill-natured*, *impertinent*, *lying* words; in short, there are evil *words* of all sorts, as well as evil thoughts; *all of which* we are here exhorted to avoid. And how happy would it be were the professors of religion in general, more circumspect particularly as to their *words*! O what reproach is oftentimes brought upon religion, and what guilt and confusion upon religious professors, by means of evil words! The tongue is a *little member*, as the apostle *James* observes, but too often it is a *very unruly* one; *an unruly evil, full of deadly poison*. But, says the same apostle, *James* i. 26. “If any man among you seemeth to be *religious*, and *bridleth not* his tongue”—well, what is the apostle’s decision concerning such a man? An awful, alarming one indeed!—For he says peremptorily, *this man’s religion is vain*. Too many make but little account of their *words*, and yet we are expressly told, that by our *words* we shall be justified, or by our *words* we shall be condemned; that is, our words do as much denominate what we are, whether

ther converted or unconverted, as any thing, seeing it is *out of the abundance of the heart*, the mouth speaketh.—Further, follow not that which is evil with respect to your *actions*. Whatever others do with whom you may be connected, of whom you may entertain a high opinion, or to whom you may be under considerable obligations;—do not *you* follow that which is evil. It is impossible that it should be ever *right*, in any circumstances, *to do* that which is in itself *wrong*. Follow not that which is evil in your *families*, in your *shops*, in your *compting-houses*, in your *amusements*, in the liveliest hour of social enjoyment, or when *alone*. As parents, masters, servants, or whatever be your stations, and whatever may be your temptations, follow not that which is evil. Be not *allured* or *awed* to the imitation of evil practices, let who will set the example; but with pious *Joshua* learn rather to say, “As for me and my house, *we will serve the Lord.*” Let us now consider

2. The positive part of the exhortation; *but follow that which is good*.—Now that which is good, is that which is agreeable to the mind and will of God, and conduces to our real good or happiness. And the Lord hath *shewed* unto us what *is good*, and what it is which he requireth of us, which is to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. This may be considered therefore as the sum of what is here recommended to us by the apostle. For though he might more immediately refer to a particular species of good, in opposition to that evil which was so apparent in the temper and conduct of *Diotrephes*, yet there is no reason at all to restrain the exhortation, nor can there be any doubt, that as on the one hand we should *not follow* that which is evil, so on the other we *should follow* that,

that, and *all* that which is good.—Here I might shew how justly our *duty* in all its branches, or that which God requireth of us, may be styled *good*. It would be easy to prove, that it is good for our bodies, good for our souls, good as to this world, and good as to that which is to come. Bodily exercise says the apostle *Paul* to *Timothy*, profiteth little, *but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Godliness with contentment, is GREAT GAIN.* Now the exhortation is with respect to every thing that is good, follow it, be found in the practice of it.—For instance, follow after or endeavor to have, *good thoughts*, good desires and affections. Read God's word, meditate upon it, and read other pious books which may have a tendency to raise and quicken spiritual thoughts and affections within you. Allow yourselves time *to retire and think.* Attend God's house, converse with his people, and in every way you can follow after *good thoughts*. The thoughts it is true are not absolutely at our command; but they are more so than we are aware, and we should find them so were we more attentive to them, and more concerned to use every method in our power to have good thoughts prevail in our hearts. It is, I am afraid, too common for persons to complain of bad thoughts, without taking any proper measures to have those which are good. My dear friends, do you expect to reap without sowing? It is tempting God. How should you have your thoughts and affections good, when perhaps you willingly go on from week to week, yea possibly from year to year, in a round of hurry and dissipation, never allowing yourselves *time* to think of spiritual things, or endeavoring to enable yourselves to think upon them with any freedom or pleasure. The
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mind requires feeding as well as the body, and healthy food, with the divine blessing, will make a healthy soul. Would you then have your thoughts habitually good, do then as good men have always done, *take measures accordingly*. Read and think of God and Christ and heaven, and the precepts and promises of the bible. It is *in* not *without* the use of means we may hope to attain the end.—In like manner, pursuing the order first laid down, follow that which is good with respect to your *words*.—Speech is a noble faculty; what a pity it is, that it should be so debased, and employed for such ignoble purposes as it too often is! How happy would it be, did the professors of religion always follow in this respect that which is *good*! Now that which is good with respect to our words, is that which is *true*, that which is *useful*, that which is good to the use of edifying. And this we are to follow, to imitate, to pursue. *Let your speech*, says the apostle to the Colossians, ch. 4. ver. 6, *be always with grace, seasoned with salt!* And were christians, when they meet together, to be more careful than they generally are as to their conversation, how amiable would it be! If we *do* speak that which is *true*, (and strange christians we must be indeed if we do not,) yet if our conversation be always *frothy, vain, trivial, censorious, impertinent*, and in no respect adapted to the use of edifying, what a reproach is it to our sacred profession! Men of business seldom are long together without saying something or other about trade, nor men of pleasure without discoursing of their various amusements; and strange it is that christians can so frequently meet together as they do without saying one word about their God and Savior, one word of a religious nature. This is the more affecting to a serious considerate mind, and
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seems to wear a more melancholy aspect as to the state of vital religion, because it is well known that *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and where our treasure is, whether it be on earth or in heaven, there will our hearts be also.* May the Lord then help us, my friends, to be in this respect more than we have ever yet been, followers of that which is good! —And further, let us follow that which is good with respect to our *actions*.—Here, I might enter at large upon the consideration of those duties which are incumbent upon professing christians, with respect particularly to their ministers. And we are, you are sensible my brethrep, exhorted to *know* them that have the rule over us, to *esteem them very highly in love* for their *work's-sake*, to give *diligent heed* to the things spoken by them, to *provide* comfortably for them, and to do every thing in our power to *strengthen their hands*, and *encourage* and animate *their hearts* in the work in which they are engaged. The apostle *Paul* says, that the Lord hath *ordained*, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. And if so, then the Lord hath *ordained* that those to whom they preach the gospel, should enable them to live. Nor will you my friends, I am persuaded, be wanting in *this expression* of love to your ministers, nor, I would hope, in any other. But above all, you will, I am confident, most effectually animate and strengthen your ministers in their work, if in your *whole deportment* you are enabled to adorn the *christian character*. Instead therefore of enlarging further on the duties you more immediately owe to your ministers, I would rather take this opportunity of earnestly exhorting you to the fulfillment of the duties of the *christian profession in general*. —Let me then say,—in private life, and in public life,
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in the respective stations in which you are or may be placed, in common, and in more sacred and special actions, follow that which is *good*. See that you do *justly*, rendering to all that which is right, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear; rendering, in short, to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, and to *GOD* the things that are *GOD's*. And not only do justly, but let it appear from your kind and benevolent behavior towards those that may be in distress, and stand in need of your assistance, that you *love mercy*; that you are pleased to have an opportunity of shewing compassion, so far from being reluctant to embrace it. And finally, let it be your principal concern, in the use of all appointed means, to *walk humbly with your God*. Communion with God is the very life and happiness of the renewed soul. And the language of God's word, and the language of experience is, "Draw nigh to God, and *he will* draw nigh to you." And yet alas! how indifferent are we too often about even communion with God! How easily diverted from those religious exercises in which we may hope to meet with our God, and receive a blessing from him! How little is there of a following after God, or, in short, after any thing that is good! Iniquity *abounds*, and the love of *many* waxes cold. There are *evil doers* in abundance, and too many of all sorts, young and old, rich and poor, are ready to follow their example; but doers of that which is *good* there are but few, and it is but one here and there that seems disposed to imitate them. The exhortation before us, however, is *not* to follow that which is evil, *but* that which is good. That is, upon the whole, to think of and practise whatsoever things are just, honest, lovely, and of good report. To follow, to copy, to imitate in all we converse with, or with whom we are in any re-

spect connected, *not* that which is *evil*, but that which is *good*. And was this to be the case in general amongst the professors of religion, O how amiable would religion appear, and how truly venerable would the professors of it be!—But alas! how few are there like *Gaius* and *Demetrius*; and how many of the temper and character of the proud overbearing *Diotrephes*!

But my brethren, what will it avail to any of us, to have a *name* to live, if we are at the same time spiritually dead? To be *professors* of religion if we are not *possessors* of it? What is the *chaff*, to the *wheat*? faith the Lord of hosts. Be not deceived, God is not mocked.—But this leads me to attend,

II. To the awakening and important consideration by which the exhortation before us is enforced.—He that doeth good *is of God*; but he that doeth evil *hath not seen God*.—The apostle you see cuts the matter very short, and is exceedingly absolute and peremptory in what he says. The Lord grant we may pay due attention to it!

1. He that doeth good is of God.—He is born of God, he is a child of God, he belongs to God, he is interested in the love of God, and shall dwell with him for ever. The apostle doth not say, he that doeth good is *entitled on that account* to the favor of God, as though he made good works the *foundation* of our acceptance in the sight of God. No; the apostle leads us to the love, the *free love of God*, as the *spring* of all our *privileges and hopes*. Behold, says he, *what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* 1 John iii. 1. And he leads us to Christ as the *meritorious procuring cause* of pardon, and of every other blessing connected with it. See 1 John

i. 7. *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* And chap. 2d. ver. 2d. *And he is the propitiation for our sins.* But the question is, Is there or is there not a difference, an essential difference, betwixt those who are evidently united to Christ, and interested in the love of God through him, and those who are not? And if there is a difference, what is that difference, and wherein does it consist? Now that there is a difference betwixt the regenerate and the unregenerate, the pious and profane, a very important one, cannot be denied; and it is equally evident, that this difference consists, upon the whole, in this: the one *have*, the others *have not* the image and superscription of Christ upon them. The difference betwixt those who are Christians or united to Christ, and those who are not, is not that the one are rich, the others poor; the one learned, the others unlearned; the one of this denomination, the others of that; the one of this way of thinking precisely, and the others of another. No, no; these distinctions are quite of a secondary and subordinate nature, and we can judge nothing from them *absolutely*, in my opinion, one way or another. The grand difference betwixt those that really are, and those that really are not Christians, whatever they may be called or esteemed by their fellow-creatures, is this, The one are *renewed*, the others are *not renewed*; the one are *holy*, the others are *unholy*; or, to keep strictly to the phrase in our text, the one *do good*, the others *do evil*.—The Christian, the real Christian, is one that *doeth good*. One that not only professes to receive and believe the good word of God, but by divine grace *acts accordingly*. He is (ἀγαθοποιῶν) a *good doer*. This is his leading character. He is a *new* creature, and new particularly in this respect, his old evil courses are done away, and

bestold all things are become new ! Not as though he was perfect, and did nothing but what is good ; for in *many* things we offend all. But he *loves* that which is good, and in a prevailing manner, and according to his circumstances and abilities, he *does* that which is good. And to guard any against that false, deceitful, and exceedingly pernicious notion, that a man that is *not a doer* of that which is good, may yet be a good or converted man, we have the following remarkable caution.

1 John iii. 7. *Little children, let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he, that is Christ, is righteous.* Yea, fired with an holy indignation at the very thought of the shocking insult that is hereby offered to the religion of the holy Jesus, his dear master, he scruples not to use the following severe expressions. *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a LYAR, and the truth is not in him.*

1 John ii. 4. As though he had said, does the man of an habitually immoral wicked life, or that lives in the known open neglect of the divine commandments, *dare* to say he knows Christ, and is savingly interested in him ? Whoever he be, *I dare* pronounce him a *lyar* ; and do thus solemnly declare, that the truth is not in him. That man, and that man *alone*, who hath so tasted that the Lord is gracious, and so felt the power of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus upon his heart, as to be quickened thereby to the love and to the practice of that which is good ;—I repeat it,—that man, and that man *alone*, is of God. No others, you may depend upon it, shall be owned of him as his children, in that awful day, when we shall be all judged, and our different characters made to appear, according to the *deeds* done in the body, whether they be *good*, or whether they be *evil*. He that doeth good is of God. O that
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this short, but weighty and important sentence, may sink deep into my heart and your's! How dreadful will it be should any of us at last appear to be only self-deceivers! And yet such, if we are not indeed in a prevailing manner *doers* of that which is good, we most certainly are. Let us then search and try our ways, and beg of God to search and try us. If we are strangers to *practical* religion, we are strangers to all *true* religion, and are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Whatever impressions have been made upon us, and whatever we may have experienced or think we have experienced, yet still, if we have never been brought to the *heartly love* and *habitual practice* of that which is good, we are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise. He that doeth good, and he only, is of God. And to be of God, to belong to *Him*, to be put amongst the children, O what a privilege, what a mercy! How thankful should *we* be, if we have any reason to hope this happiness is ours!

But as he that doeth good is of God, so in the 2d place. He that doeth evil hath not seen God.—The (*κακοποιῶν*) the *evil doer*, the apostle observes, hath not seen God.—By the evil-doer, we are not to understand *every one* that doth evil, for there is not a just man upon earth that liveth and *sinneth not*, no, not one; but by the evil-doer we are to understand an *habitual* evil-doer, one that does not concern himself about that which is good, but rather gives himself up, according to his particular taste, to work iniquity of one kind or another with greediness and delight. Now the apostle says of such a man, *he hath not seen God*. The expressions are remarkable, and the amount of them is this;—he is not a converted man. The natural or unconverted

converted man it is said *cannot know*, that is whilst he is unconverted, the things of the Spirit of God, because they are *spiritually* discerned. Now here, in the same strain, the apostle says of an habitual worker of iniquity, he hath *not seen God*. That is, he has never had a spiritual view of him, has never seen his excellency, his glory, his amiableness, so as to desire to be conformed to him; has never seen him with an enlightened mind, but makes it evidently appear that he is a stranger to him, and has no part nor lot in him. So far is such a person from being *of God*, or belonging to him, whatever he may ignorantly pretend, that it is plain he has never *seen* him, never had a just, a spiritual view of him. What is it but a spiritual *sight* of God, a sight of his glory, especially as it is amiably exhibited in the person of his dear Son, that begets in us a hatred of sin, and a zeal for holiness? Where this hatred and zeal therefore are wanting, it is a demonstration that this spiritual sight of God hath never been enjoyed.

Good works you see then, though very far from being in any respect the ground or *meritorious cause* of our salvation, yet are the *invariable fruit* of divine grace in the hearts and lives of the people of God, and the *necessary evidence* of our interest in the great gospel salvation. Would to God therefore that we, my brethren, whilst we dare not *boast* of our good works, which discovers a lamentable degree of pride and ignorance, may yet be enabled more than ever to abound in the practice of them, ever following *not* that which is evil, but that which is good! He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

And now, my dear friends, let us all solemnly ask ourselves, whose image and superscription do we bear?

Are

—Are we of God, or are we not? You have heard what sort of persons those are who are of God; are you, through rich grace, or are you not of this number? Amidst all your many unallotted and lamented infirmities, can you or can you not say, you are lovers and doers in a measure, and desire to be more so, of that which is good? Hath the grace of God reached your hearts, or hath it not? Are you the servants of God, or the servants of sin?—These are questions, Sirs, of the last importance: God grant we may all be enabled to return satisfactory answers to them!

Are you of God? Yes, I hope you are. You are *professedly* so, and I would hope you are *really* so. O how great your happiness, and how great ought to be your thankfulness!—Are you of God? It is by the *grace* of God you are what you are.—Are you of God? You shall then in due time be with God. He will keep you by his mighty power, through faith, unto salvation! He will guide you by his counsel, and afterward receive you to glory.—Are you of God? O love him then, trust in him, and follow hard after him! And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, may you and your ministers jointly receive, a crown of glory which fadeth not away!

But are there any in this numerous assembly, who have never seen God, but are strangers to him and the way of salvation he hath ordained in and through his dear Son? Permit me, before I close, to say a word or two to persons of this character.—O what deplorable circumstances, sinners, you are in! Have you never seen God, seen him as he is revealed in the gospel, seen him as a reconciled God through Jesus Christ! Then you can have no hope in him. And to be without hope, hope in God, what can be conceived of more deplorable!

deplorable ! O sinners, however contented you may live without God now, what must be your agony and distress when you shall be banished from God hereafter ! When you shall be commanded to depart into everlasting burnings, with the devil and his angels for ever ! I am distressed for you. I tremble to think, should you continue in the state in which you now are, what *will* most assuredly become of you. Think, O think upon your ways e'er it be too late, and may the Lord help you effectually to turn your feet unto his testimonies ! O that you may be *all* brought to the foot of the throne of grace, there with penitent hearts humbly to cry out, God be merciful to us sinners ! Turn us, and we shall be turned !

THE E N D.

To be CORRECTED.

Page 5. line 6. for *devotest*, read *devout*.---P. 17. l. 12. from the bottom, for *keep* read *help*.---P. 21. l. 10. from the bottom, for *may* read *must*.---P. 22. l. 4. from the bottom, for *scenes* read *sources*.



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